



An academic “bildungsroman”: Faculty development in transitional spaces

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Summary

Faculty members who move from traditional science to community-engaged research are often bucking departmental norms. The purpose of this autoethnographic paper is to examine one researcher's experiences in “growing up” intellectually and consider why faculty members make such a transition and how department chairs can support that transition. It is conceptualized and presented in the style of the German bildungsroman, which is a coming of age story, including the moral and psychological growth of the protagonist. The purpose of the inquiry is to explore, through a personal narrative, why and how a faculty member might transition from one academic upbringing (in this case, an empirical, positivistic, deductive view), to community-engaged work, or an intellectual stance that values the lived experiences, and research grounded in real, tangible community problems.

This presentation follows one researcher's story so listeners can experience the unfolding of these

threads in her research agenda. This autoethnography is meant to illuminate problems and processes, and this presentation will leave audience members with questions to ponder related to their own growth and home departments.

Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their own attitudes toward graduate students and new faculty, and consider how to best “raise” them in an environment that provides the best educational, social, and emotional resources for their line of work. Considerations include:

- If education is meant to change how people think, will the initial advisor-student match continue to be effective? How will faculty members fit with department missions in the long-term? How can we better assess that fit?
- What message is sent when recruiting students or new faculty? How does a department represent itself? Are research agendas in line with department mission?
- What supports are in place for new faculty members? How does the department work with “chameleons”, or members who change agendas after hired?

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